



U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE

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Local men sentenced to over twenty years each for shooting into a crowd outside a local nightclub

WASHINGTON - Three local men have been sentenced to more than 20 years in prison each for their roles in a shooting that occurred in November 2007 outside the former Envy nightclub in Northeast Washington, D.C., U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor announced today.

Cornell Swangin, 23, Charles Mobley, 24, and Gerald Thompkins, 20, all of the District of Columbia, received their sentences on May 5, 2009, before the Honorable Harold L. Cushenberry, Jr. in D.C. Superior Court to periods of incarceration of 33½ years, 24½ years, and 23¼ years, respectively, after previously being found guilty by a jury in November 2008 of numerous crimes in connection with the shooting. Specifically, the three defendants were convicted of two counts of Assaulting a Police Officer while Armed, five counts of Assault with a Dangerous Weapon, and multiple counts of Possession of a Firearm During a Crime of Violence, as well as other related firearm offenses. Swangin and Thompkins were also convicted of multiple counts of Obstructing Justice, and Thompkins of Attempted Tampering with Physical Evidence.

The government's evidence during the three-week trial established that on November 24, 2007, at approximately 3:00 a.m., the three defendants and a fourth individual (a juvenile) left the Envy nightclub, then located at 2135 Queens Chapel Road, NE, and made their way to their nearby car. They each retrieved handguns from the car and then brazenly opened fire towards the front entrance of the nightclub, unleashing a hail of bullets in the direction of four uniformed police officers posted outside the nightclub, as well as numerous patrons making their way out of the club. Metropolitan Police Department Officers Lance Bishop, Gregory Evelyn, Samuel Geddies, and James Sulla, all in the line of fire, took cover behind their patrol cars, and Officer Samuel Geddies returned fire in defense of himself, his fellow officers, and the crowd of people outside the club. Crime scene evidence later showed that the defendants fired more than 20 shots between them from at least four separate guns; miraculously, no one was struck by their gunfire.

The defendants then fled the scene at high speeds, leading police officers on a high speed chase through residential areas of the District's Brookland neighborhood. They eventually arrived at the Edgewood Apartment Complex, where the defendants bailed out of their car and fled on foot, firing back at police as they ran. Swangin and Mobley were captured and arrested that night; Thompkins and the juvenile suspect were identified and arrested approximately two weeks thereafter.

The government's evidence also proved that defendants Swangin and Thompkins obstructed justice by threatening a government witness and attempting to dispose of one of the firearms they used in the shooting.

In announcing the Court's sentence, U.S. Attorney Taylor expressed his appreciation to the Metropolitan Police Department, and particularly praised the work of MPD Officers Lance Bishop, Gregory Evely, Samuel Geddies, and James Sulla, all of whom were in the line of fire and assisted in the capture of the defendants. U.S. Attorney Taylor also expressed his appreciation to MPD Detectives Carter Adams, Jonathan Clingerman, Anthony Commodore, and Eric Fenton, Sergeant Durriyyah Habeebullah, and firearms examiner Michael Mulderig, all of whom investigated this case. The U.S. Attorney also commended the work of Legal Assistants Antoinette Sakamsa and Tameka Garcia, who helped prepare this case through the grand jury indictment process and for trial, and Litigation Support Specialists Thomas Royal and Kimberly Smith, who helped prepare the over 200 exhibits for trial. Finally, the U.S. Attorney commended the work of Assistant U.S. Attorneys Melinda Williams and Sharad Khandelwal for investigating and indicting the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Keith Becker who, along with Mr. Khandelwal, prosecuted the case at trial.

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